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ABSTRACT

School leaders must develop skills and tools to create patterns of relationships that facilitate collegiality and shared decision making and promote reflective inquiry. The connection between the preparation of school leaders and the daily process of nurturing a learning community is important. School leaders must develop and enhance their own self-efficacy and promote a nurturing educational culture that will develop and enhance self-efficacy in teachers, students, and parents. In the face of increasing school violence, self-efficacy is essential for students. Underlying assumptions for a new structure for school leader education include: each person is part of a system with various subsystems linking to other systems; each person seeks to maintain and enhance the self-system; leaders with self-efficacy can promote collective efficacy; and leaders must be trained with a knowledge base in systems thinking and the dynamics of empowerment and energy connections. Ingredients for self-efficacy that school leaders must develop fall into three categories: focus, flow, and follow-through. For clarity, a constellation consisting of the caterpillar, the clown, and curry (the spice) serves as the metaphor for the three skills that school leaders must develop internally to provide support and facilitate the process in others. (Contains 35 references.) (SM)

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Introduction

Thomas Sergiovanni in his Moral Leadership (1992) asserts that we have overemphasized the techno-rational authority rather than the professional and moral authority in our preparation of leaders. Underscoring this focus, Zaleznik (1989) states that we have promoted structure, roles, and indirect forms of communication and ignored people, ideas, emotions, and direct talk. Leadership is stewardship. School leaders must develop the skills and the tools to create patterns of relationships that facilitate collegiality and shared decision making, and promote reflective inquiry.

W. Edwards Deming has guided us in our thinking to see that we must look at quality, relationships, priorities, and systems in new ways (Walton, 1986). His model for Total Quality Management is not usually a major focus of leadership training. Margaret Wheatley in Leadership and the New Science (1992) shows us new views of chaos theory and the application of systems thinking in organizations. Relationships are the critical energy focus of successful organizations.

Many more resources are available today for schools to implement a student support system, provide connections, and break down barriers of isolation. Such models as The National Student Assistance Program developed by Cheryl Watkins of Phoenix, Arizona is an example of students, teachers, counselors, and school leaders working together to support students. Tribes, an interactive program for elementary school children has been around since the 1970s and is available on the world wide web. Barry Zimmerman's Developing Self-Regulated Learners: Beyond Achievement to Self-Efficacy shows teachers how to create learnin activities that empower students. Of course the works of Brooks and Brooks (1993) have given the education community research in Constructivist practices; Johnson and Johnson (1990), and Spencer Kagan (1994) have shown educators the value and models of Cooperative Learning; and Caine and Caine (1994) relate the explosions in brain-based learning research to classroom practice.

A New Model for School Leader Education

The connection between the preparation of school leaders and the daily process of nurturing a learning community must be emphasized. In doing so we create a shift of mind – metanoia: a new way of looking at the preparation of school leaders. As Sergiovanni (1992) has pointed out, the common graduate curriculum for school leaders includes procedures, policies, theory, and applications of such topics as school law, school finance, evaluation of teaching, technology, curriculum, organizational theory, and school-community issues.

These are all skills that focus on the external environment. What is missing is the knowledge and practice of such skills as team building, group process, group facilitation, consensus building, -- that is, skills of human relatedness and connection. These skills manifest at the internal as well as the external level. At the core of these skills is self-efficacy. The school leader must develop and enhance the self – develop his or her own self-efficacy – as well as promote a nurturing educational culture that will develop and enhance the self-efficacy in each teacher, each child, and each parent.

The United States and Britain have recently suffered the loss of their children through violence at the hands of other children through the use of firearms. From this numbing violence we have become more aware that many children in our societies are alienated and isolated. Their pain is exploding with the tools of violence. If we believe that each child can develop self-efficacy, we must wake up and realize that schools must educate and nurture each child – each whole child, not just the intellect. Educators and researchers are discovering rapidly that the whole child is not a receptacle in which to pour facts and knowledge. Howard Gardner's work in Multiple Intelligences, Renetta Caine's writings of the current brain research and learning, Dan Golman's research in Emotional Intelligence, Martin Seligman;s research in Learned Optimism, and Albert Bandura's work in Self-Efficacy are but a few of the major shifts in views and frameworks occurring in this exciting and shocking time. School leaders today must have the knowledge, the skills, and the inner strength

to orchestrate the school communities as each creates its own unique harmony, its own grand symphony, Otherwise we are faced with more trauma, more violence, and more deafening cacophony.

Assumptions

The underlying assumptions of a new structure for school leader education are:

(1) Each person is part of a system which has various subsystems and links to other systems. Systems thinking as set forth by Peter Senge (1990) asserts that human endeavors are systems. We are bound together by invisible webs of connections or links. At the heart of the learning organization is a shift of mind – we shift from seeing ourselves as separate from the world to being connected to the world.

(2) Each person seeks to maintain and enhance the self-system (Combs & Snygg, 1959). This process means that each person has certain needs. According to Glasser (1992) we have five basic needs: survival, freedom, belonging, fun, and power. Rollo May in Power and Innocence (1974) defines power as the power to be. It is the capacity to assert the self, to be able to do things. To create meaning. Bandura's work in his social learning theory highlights the individual's purpose to gain self-efficacy.

(3) Leasers with self-efficacy can promote collective efficacy and thus develop a synergistic organization. The new physics is showing us the energy connections at cellular levels and external levels of human beings and the earth (Capra, Bohm, 1993).

(4) School leaders, whether they are building principals, district superintendents, or teacher leaders, must be trained with a knowledge base in systems thinking and the dynamics of empowerment and energy connections. Learning organizations are systems of dynamic energy that tend toward creativity. School leaders must have the conceptual framework and the basic tools and ingredients to nurture, to support, to focus, to facilitate flow, and to enhance this dynamic, living system.

Self-Efficacy Theory

Albert Bandura's work in a social learning theory evolved into the publication of Self-Efficacy Mechanism in Human Agency (1982). The term efficacy, means "the power or capacity to produce effects; ability to bring about the intended result" (1993, Oxford English Dictionary). Bandura maintains that each child can develop self-efficacy -- the belief that he or she is capable and controls her life. In 1997, Bandura published his most recent work, Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of control. "Perceived self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce

given attainments" (p. 3). The value of Self-Efficacy Theory is realized from the guidelines put forth on how to enable people to exercise some influence in how they live their lives. A theory that can be used to enhance human efficacy has a much greater social utility than those that merely provide correlates of perceived control but say little about how to foster desired changes. It is important to note that self-efficacy differs from self-esteem. These are two entirely different constructs. Perceived self-efficacy clearly focuses on judgments of personal capability. Self-esteem is concerned with judgments of self-worth.

The ingredients for self-efficacy that school leaders must develop fall into three categories of skills: Focus, Flow, and Follow-through. These three skills enable aikido masters to blend with the energies within and around them. They flow gracefully, and transform conflict into harmony (Dreher, 1996). For clarity and fun, a constellation made up of the caterpillar, the clown, and the spice, curry, serves as the metaphor for these three skills the school leader must develop internally to provide support in order to facilitate the process in others.

The caterpillar. If anyone has watched a caterpillar on the rim of a jar, one sees that the caterpillar goes around and around following the edge closely – tightly focused on the path. The caterpillar is tenacious, all of his little feet cling surely to the path. School leaders must be focused on the school and community's mission and core values, tenacious in sticking to the path, and motivated to the purpose of student growth and learning. At the same time, school leaders must be ready for transformation and change — like de Saint-

Exupery's Little Prince, the school leader "must endure the presence of two or three caterpillars if I wish to become acquainted with the butterflies" (p. 40). The metamorphosis of becoming something greater than the original purpose flows from a clear focus. That something will take flight, soar, and be beautiful to the school's stakeholders, reaching a yet more refined purpose and clarity of focus.

The clown evokes ethos and pathos. Tragi-comedy is the most existential dramatic form, the one closest to the truth of the human situation. The clown's fidelity and satirical honesty wins our sympathy. There is also a dash of the comedic roguery and bravado and a vein of nonsense at once professional and spontaneous. The clown's profession has been folly at court – becomes a philosopher in the forest (Craig, 1951). Here is the source, the credibility of the school mission and path. The school leader is in the flow of the process at a deep level of compassion, nurturing the vision of the teachers, parents, and community for the children's growth and development. In an ongoing flow of connections, the school leader will model and reflect the joys and excitement of being and learning, as well as the sorrows of failure and loss. Self-efficacy is critical here. Experiencing flow requires one to be in charge of one's own work. The matching of skills to challenges is vital, for this is a condition of growth. Csikszentmihalyi (1990,p.74) reports the finding that "every flow activity, whether it involved competition, chance, or some other experience, had this in common: It provided a sense of discovery, a creative feeling of transporting the person into a new reality. It pushed the person to higher levels of performance. . . .

It transformed the self by making it more complex. In this growth of the self lies the key to flow activities."

The curry, of course, is the zeal, the passion, and the courage that moves a school leader to create the culture of the learning organization. Here is the ultimate energy that fuels the system. Robert Pirsig (1976) talks about the word gumption. "The Greeks called it enthousiasmos, the root of "enthusiasm," which means literally "filled with theos" or God, or Quality" (p.296). Gumption is the psychic gasoline that keeps the whole engine going according to Pirsig. This is the Aikido process of irimi – that of moving into the situation, embracing life, and developing deeper contact with our center. A school leader so in tuned will give energy and provide follow-through to the people in the school-community system. Connected leaders create unity and connections that allow all within the system to also connect to one another and provide care and nurturance. Such leaders promote synergy. Synergy is the curry that gives people the momentum to take on greater challenges.

Toward a New School Leaders Curriculum

As Roberts noted in 1990, "To cultivate and develop school leaders who can meet the challenges of new structures and reforming school practices will require a dismantling and restructuring of the ways in which such leaders are prepared and trained" (p. 135).

The importance of human relationships is the foundation for a new curriculum for school leaders. Combs, (1999) emphasizes a "Person-Centered Preparation of School Leaders" in the recent work On Becoming a School Leader. Here is the critical focus and underpinning for new programs in leadership. Combs asserts, "An emphasis on human beings, or a person-centered view, suggests that people do not respond directly to forces exerted on them; rather, they behave according to the meanings that exist for them at a given time" (p. 203).

In addition to the emphasis on relationships, Combs further recommends field work -- that is, extending the relationships beyond the classroom to the school organization. Many groups such as the Holmes Groups (1986) have called for closer links between K-12 and higher education, particularly in teacher and administrator preparation programs. Principal candidates and university professors can engage in dialogue -- and reflect on daily practice, research, and theory. Principal candidates also engage in activities of the school in internship programs. Bandura states that "enactive mastery experiences are the most influential source of efficacy information because they provide the most authentic evidence of whether one can muster whatever it takes to succeed . . . Successes build a robust belief in one's personal efficacy" (p. 80).

"Empowerment" is not something bestowed through edict" (Bandura, 1997. P. 477). A school leader will promote effective teamwork only through self-regulatory efficacy. Groups who maintain a perceived collective efficacy may be

the critical dynamic governing such effective teamwork. Vital to this outcome is group self-management, flexibility, variety, shared purposes, open communication, and mutual support (Campion, Medsker, & Higgs, 1993). School leaders' preparation, therefore, incorporates collaboration and delegation skills, as well as communication and conflict resolution skills. Underlying these external skills, the school leaders continue the inner work of reflection: focus, flow, and follow-through.

Conclusion

To explore and create new ways of looking at the school as an energy system, a web of connections and interrelatedness, of people who are neither dependent nor independent, but interdependent – may generate dialogues that will begin to develop a new view of the school leader. A view that sees the school principal, or superintendent, or teacher, as greater than a mere manager, more than a leader, but a catalyst and a bridge that will transform the culture of the organization as well as the people in it. It is vital today in our rapidly changing society to develop skills and teach skills that will lead to self efficacy for all learners and collective efficacy for all educational organizations.

Analyzing others is knowledge
Knowing yourself is wisdom.
Managing others requires skill.
Mastering yourself takes inner strength.

Knowing when enough is enough
Is wealth of spirit.
Be present, observe the process,
Stay centered, and prevail.
(Tao 33)

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